The Adventures of the Count of Monte Cristo

Secrets of the Extraordinary Career of

IN literature the adventures of the Count of Monte Cristo by the great Dumas stand out as a masterpiece of imagination. The marvelous, the extraordinary, the almost incredible exploits of this novelist's hero of fiction are the fascination of this great novel.

But this purely imaginative character of fiction HAS BEEN OUTDONE IN REAL LIFE BY A REAL CHARACTER.

For every exploit of the Count of Monte Cristo there is a real-life exploit to outmatch it by Jacques Lebaudy.

Monte Cristo had fabulous wealth; but Lebaudy was possessed of a real fortune far beyond the imaginary wealth accredited the hero of fiction.

The Count had one Parisian residence; Lebaudy maintained no less than seven elaborate residences in the most fashionable parts of Paris.

Monte Cristo accomplished many of his astonishing exploits by the skilful use of various disguises; Jacques Lebaudy outrivaled him in variety of disguises, sometimes masquerading as a Field Marshal of France or hiding his identity disguised as a blind beggar or a Moorish brigand or shuffling along Fifth Avenue in the ragged togs of a tramp.

His Majesty's Official Stationery —and— Photograph of the French Beauty, Mlle. Bresil, Whom Lebaudy Invited to Become a Lady of the Court Under the Title of H. R. H. the Princess of the Canaries.

CHAPTER I.

FIVE bullets from the pistol of a woman who claims to be his wife ended, on January 11, the career of Jacques Lebaudy—a career so extraordinary that it has no exact parallel in fact or fiction.

Perhaps the hero of Dumas' great novel, "The Count of Monte Cristo," most nearly approaches the character which Lebaudy played in real life. Is it possible that the adventures and exploits of Monte Cristo inspired Lebaudy? If so, Lebaudy outdid the count at every point.

Lebaudy's most spectacular exploit was his undertaking to establish an empire all for himself in Africa. The details of this astonishing enterprise may as well be told at once, for it was his first, but by no means his last, remarkable adventure.

Jacques Lebaudy had inherited a huge fortune from his father, known in France as the "Sugar King." Lebaudy was called the Rockefeller of France. Backed by his enormous wealth the conquest of Sahara was not at all an insane project. Eccentric he certainly was, but Lebaudy's intimate friends have always declared that he was not a crazy man.

It is now possible for the first time to tell how and where Lebaudy got his idea of going to Africa and founding the Empire of Sahara and installing himself as the Emperor. The seeds of the plan for this ambitious undertaking were sowed in Lebaudy's receptive mind by one of the best known "men about town" in Paris, Jimmy Langerman.

Langerman was one of the many unique, butterfly figures of the gay French capital, having no visible means of support, but always well supplied with money, a bon vivant and an adventurer. Nobody knew where he came from, and nobody cared. He was well liked and therefore welcome everywhere. He was a big, powerful fellow, an elaborate dresser, fine looking and of engaging personality. He took no thought for the morrow and apparently he was justified in this, for the morrow always seemed to look after Jimmy in fine shape. His utter indifference to anything of a serious nature made a hit with the French and Paris took him to her heart.

Such was the type of man who got Lebaudy aside one day in a quiet corner of a secluded cafe in Paris and told him of the wonderful opportunity of owning his own empire in the Sahara. Lebaudy had just come into his great inheritance from the estate of his father, the famous multimillionaire sugar king. Langerman knew all about the country, the people and the opportunities in northern Africa, because he had spent three or four years in Morocco, and while he was there he was in the position to acquaint himself with the possibility of putting over his scheme. It seemed that he and the Sultan of Morocco became close friends. Langerman had an extremely ingratiating way about him, and it was not long before he had so charmed the Sultan with his personality that the Sultan was taking Langerman's word for everything, particularly in the matter of spending money.

Langerman called his attention to the fact that there were no automobiles in the country, and the Sultan promptly imported a large number of the most expensive French cars. That led naturally and easily to other and greater extravagances, and in a few months the Sultan became such a spendthrift that he thought no more of a million dollars than he did of the air in one of his old tires.

It is significant, by the way, that a good deal of the money spent in this way by the Sultan found its way to Paris, for one thing or another, and after the Sultan was deposed and he had plenty of time to think things over the idea probably came to him that Langerman had likely been profiting handsomely on the purchases.

At any rate the Sultan and Langerman had the time of their lives until one day Langerman showed up in Paris with the Sultan's family and crown jewels, which it became necessary to pawn in order to allow the Sultan to meet certain pressing obligations and save his throne. The jewels were pawned for a fabulous sum and Langerman returned to his frolic with the Sultan. The warm sun shed its smiling rays over Morocco while the money lasted. When the eclipse came the Sultan was deposed and fled into private life and Langerman took a boat that night for Paris.

But the possibilities of African exploitation had seeped into Langerman's blood and he cast about for more adventure there. It was then that he went to Lebaudy and sang his siren song.

Langerman's purpose in inducing Lebaudy to go to Africa was not a purely unselfish one. Brotherly love was not an outstanding quality of his make-up if his bank account was running low, and his idea in getting Lebaudy to establish a kingdom in Sahara was to eventually install himself as confidential advisor to Emperor Jacques, in which capacity he could advise the king to spend money in a way that would benefit Langerman's financial position.

Lebaudy at first was rather cold to the proposition. It seemed too chimerical. The very idea of taking over a vast tract of valuable land and by the simple act of seizure owning and ruling over it and its people seemed too much like fiction. But every doubting question Lebaudy raised Langerman answered convincingly. The more Lebaudy thought of it the more feasible it seemed, and he and Langerman began to work out the project in detail.

As Langerman drew the picture, the country was a veritable land of promise, rich in unmined precious stones and minerals and undeveloped vegetation, acres upon acres of untold wealth and possibilities—of such was the Empire of Sahara. Hence any expense entailed in the project would be negligible compared to the increment derived. A little outlay would be necessary, to be sure, but that was nothing compared with what would be gained. The country was there, simply waiting to be taken. Why, it was simplicity itself! The only reason no one had taken it before, he explained, was because they didn't know about it, but he knew about it because he had been there.

And so Lebaudy decided to renounce private life and become a self-made Emperor. The plan was really not a crazy one. Lebaudy's own very clear headed analysis of the opportunity and his efforts to grasp it are plausible. The hard-headed business men of the Standard Oil Company have backed projects more hazardous.

It was sixteen years ago that Lebaudy's secretly planned expedition landed on the desert coast of Africa and set up his claim of empire. A clash with a native tribe of Moors convinced him that a military conquest would be necessary; so he withdrew, went to England and began to recruit an army, a navy and a royal court—crown, throne, robes, court officials, musicians, painters and ladies of the court.

Having established himself in the imperial suite at the Hotel Savoy, Lebaudy busied himself for several months with these manifold details of empire.

He then declared himself Emperor of the Sahara under the title of Jacques I., and announced to all the European governments that he was the sovereign of this unoccupied territory. It consisted principally of desert sand. Five of his sailors whom he left behind at one spot were captured by a desert tribe and rescued with great difficulty by the French warship Galilee. He had many other difficulties and also disputes with various governments, but, in spite of these, he proceeded with the establishment of his empire. He selected the site of his capital in the desert, which he called Troja, evidently in memory of ancient Troy.

Lebaudy made several trips to France, converting a very large amount of property into ready money, and then settled down at the Savoy with his imperial retainers to the serious business of empire building. No detail seems to have been overlooked.

His Majesty procured the most complete and splendid regalia and insignia of empire, court and government. In the first place, there was his throne, which was of beautifully carved ivory, with a purple velvet seat. Into the design of the throne the palm leaf, emblematic of his African empire, was worked repeatedly.

He also ordered and received a golden crown from the first jeweller of the Rue de la Paix. It was a closed crown, surmounted by a cross, and splendidly adorned with pearls, diamonds and rubies. The jewels were incased in the bends. He also ordered imperial robes closely modeled from those worn by Napoleon I at his coronation.

The Emperor designed two flags, which he began to use at once—one being his personal imperial flag and the other the flag of his infant navy. His personal flag bore three golden bees upon a field of violet, above them being the imperial crown. The bees were evidently borrowed from the Napoleonic escutcheon. He had had a beautifully finished guillotine bearing his escutcheon made in France with which to execute offenders and make his name respected in his African domains.

The postage stamps of the Sahara empire were carefully designed and printed. He received 100,000 and reserved 10,000 for the fortunate stamp collectors. The design was a ship, with a desert and a palm tree in the background. They bore the inscription "Postes du Sahara," with the value in French money.

His Majesty Jacques I., like the Emperor Napoleon I., was anxious to found a regular imperial court, and, being new to the ruling caste, was in very much the same difficulty as his famous predecessor. Napoleon made dukes and princes out of his marshals, many of whom had been common soldiers, stable boys, blacksmiths, and men of various humble occupations. They and their wives made some very painful mistakes when they tried to be courtiers, and the Emperor had to engage old-time noblemen, dancing masters, etc., to teach them distinguished manners and courtliness.

Jacques I. had not associated with quite the same sort of men and women as Napoleon's courtiers, but then, again, they had not belonged to the aristocracy. His dearest friends had been the fair artistes of the cafe concerts and the most attractive actresses of the Parisan stage. They were all offered positions at the court of the Sahara.

Jacques I. devised an extremely ingenious plan for creating a suitable court and nobility. The plan does justice to his versatile intellect. He engaged a number of bankrupt British noblemen and younger sons of the aristocracy to be his courtiers and some of the most fascinating cafe concert artistes of Paris to be the ladies of the court. The English noblemen were to contribute dignity and gravity to the court, while the ladies were to contribute grace and vivacity. Among the charming ornaments of the Paris cafe concerts and variety theatres who were invited to adorn the imperial court of the Sahara were Mlle. Germaine Gallois, Mlle. Bresil and Mlle. Megard.

One young lady, Mlle. Augustine Delierre, made the first trip to Africa with the Emperor. She was a charming brunette from Avignon, in the south of France, with a seductive voice. It was this same woman who shot Lebaudy the other day at his Long Island home.

All the cafe concert girls were to be made princesses and duchesses of the empire, and wear characteristic robes at the Saharan court, the details of which were prescribed by His Majesty. There were to be a Princess of the Canaries, a Princess of Fignig, a Princess of Bojador, a Princess of Juby, a Princess of the Oasis of Champagne, and duchesses without number.

The ladies of the court, Lebaudy said, will while away the clear, enchanting Saharan nights with song and dance, while the Emperor will offer inexhaustible champagne. The court will undoubtedly be more entertaining than that of any European monarch. The oases of the Sahara are the loveliest places in the world, with their palm trees and verdure glistening amid the desert sands. There is no rain, no clouds, no change of climate, no cold, gray dawn of the morning after. With proper irrigation His Majesty believes he can make an oasis anywhere. This was the picture he drew of the empire he had in mind.

America was to share the honor of being represented at the Emperor's court. It was to be splendidly represented by Colonel C. E. Gouraud, one of the most gorgeous human beings that ever lived. He introduced Edison's phonograph into England. The Colonel was appointed Governor-General of the Sahara. It was His Majesty's gracious intention that the Colonel should govern the empire in his absence. The Colonel ordered an appropriate uniform.

English speaking persons who tried to catch a glimpse of the Emperor usually ran into the Colonel. He explained that the Emperor intended to soothe and tame the savage inhabitants of the desert by playing phonographs and gramophones for them. Of course, His Majesty had ordered a huge supply of the machines.

"We shall charm the inhabitants of the desert," said the Colonel at the Savoy Hotel, "with the phonograph and the gramophone—let them sing their native songs into it and hear their own voices coming out of these wonderful machines. They will be charmed into the ways of peace by the voice of science. I may tell you also that the Emperor has a great faith in the typewriter. He intends to take a number of them with him, and to have special ones which can typewrite the native tongues. In short, he intends to introduce civilization into the Sahara, which is not at all the place some people believe, for within its boundaries, which are as big as Europe's are, there are all kinds of land, minerals in plenty—everything waiting for the hand of progress.

"An idea of my own," he went on, "is to have an automobile road 150 feet wide right through the country from sea to sea. No trains—their day is over. M. Lebaudy found this country awaiting civilization. He had the capital and the genius, and the world will see what he can do with both."

The Count of Monte Cristo was an assumed title, f
fiction hero to create for himself an imaginary domain
likewise Lebaudy was pleased to call himself the Emp
Lebaudy excelled the imagination of the novelist becaus
establish a veritable empire in Africa.

While Monte Cristo contented himself with a card
Lebaudy printed imperial bank notes, engraved special
lamations under his imperial seal.

While Monte Cristo was content with a little ima
island, Lebaudy's imperial plans contemplated a great e
ambitious schemes of industrial development.

Monte Cristo's schemes involved him with the F
schemes set both the French and Spanish Governments b

The Count of Monte Cristo delighted in wearing th
the Moors. So, also, Lebaudy for months at a time disc
France and arrayed himself in a red cap with long blue
with gold, pantaloons and gaiters of deep red richly emb
for his feet, around his waist a gorgeous sash of cashme
long crooked knife—the exact native garb of the Moors.

Monte Cristo cruised about the Mediterranean in a
of half a dozen, Jacques Lebaudy cruised about the Medi
in royal luxury with a crew of a hundred officers and

If the Count of Monte Cristo suffered in his prison d
in prison and nearly died from starvation.

If the Count of Monte Cristo pursued his enemies r
With resourceful ingenuity he never failed to punish hi
anybody who tried to interfere with him.

The Count accomplished the ruin of a great Parisian
fered with his plans. Lebaudy undertook to destroy the
tor, and succeeded so well that the suicide of his rival's
financial loss to the Princess de Broglie and other men an
resulted.

Monte Cristo was accustomed to excite the cupidity
devotion of his friends by a display of a valuable gem.
but instead of a jewel, Lebaudy would draw from his
and stack them on the table.

The Count had a ward, a beautiful Greek girl, upon
fection; Lebaudy had a wonderfully beautiful Turkish girl
and educated with parental solicitude.

And thus the parallel runs on and on—the real life
at every point Dumas's fantastic creation of fiction.
published and unknown details of the career of this ext
lected here and abroad by one who shared his secrets an
week to week.

His Majesty was insistent that his court should open at Troja thoroughly trained, and therefore he began holding dress rehearsals in the imperial apartments at the Savoy Hotel.

He realized that his newly created Princesses, Duchesses and other ladies of the court whom he had so suddenly raised to the peerage from the concert halls and the comic opera choruses must have a chance to practice their new roles. Sitting upon the ivory throne, wearing his crown and his purple robes embroidered with golden bees, with a world-weary air upon his brow, like Alexander sighing for new worlds to conquer, Lebaudy received the homage of the ladies of the court and watched the court dancers as they performed entrancingly to the strains of soft music. Colonel Gouraud and his other great officers of state surrounded him and a diminutive colored sceptre-bearer sat at his feet.

His Majesty engaged a large staff of court painters and musicians from Montmartre and the Bohemian circles of Paris. An imperial court motion picture operator was also appointed to amuse His Majesty and civilize the barbarous Berbers.

The Emperor secured a magnificent person to be commander-in-chief of his armies. This was General Laber